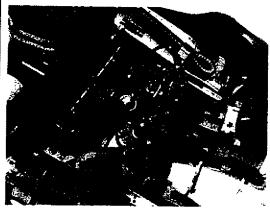


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ABOVE First introduced in 1997, this case reed triple with flat-slides delivers nice, mellow power and gets surprisingly good gas mileage compared to a same-sized twin.

The fact is, the Venom is the most expensive sled in the group and the margin is widest between it and the Indy 500, the sled it most closely competes with on design and feature benefits. On the other hand, it's challenging to compare the Venom to the REV when the rechnology is so completely different between the two One is old school, the other is radical, contemporary and a glimpse into the future. The Venom's equal length radius rod front end was old five years ago and its Pro-Action Plus skid-frame should be replaced with Yamaha's own

One factor in a value equation is always what the moumobile will be worth two or three winters bence. While the Venom has appeal - that singing triple and dare-the-devil styling - the key question remains will a moumobile exading this much old school command any price when the time comes to say goodbye? Since a buyer better plan to run the wheels off this Yamaha to get maximum value, we would've been happier with the new Vector shid. - G.J. Romstad

After grabbing the sun slipper and listening to the 3 into 1 symphony out the exhaust, I was quite impressed. Very smooth power. The Pro-Action skid was lacking in humpy conditions, Raxing blue looks great on snow. - A.J. Lester

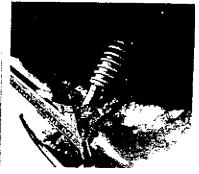
LEFT: A warm windshield, great instruments and excellent switchgear make riding the Yenom a pleasure on groomed traits.

> new Vector technology. In fact, if it were, the Venom would be a lighter, completely different sted with a huge improvement - and a giant leap on the value quotient

The Venom is most comfortable on fast, smooth trails where its engine can wind out and its suspension isn't overly taxed. The shock choice on this sted (hydrautics on the front, gas cell shocks on the rear) is not at the premium level of some Pro-Action Plus Yamahas of the past. To be fair, we always felt this fully coupled skild rode better with cheaper shocks than it did with the more pricey IFP gassers offered on say, the Viper. The skid offers plenty of adjustment and if riders are careful and attentive with settings, the ride can be decent.

Equipment is fairly abundant: great handlebar heaters, teally good composite saddleless skis, full instrumentation, a 1-

inch deep Camoplast track and very appealing styling. Electric start and reverse are expensive



With trailing arms and equal length radius rods, the Yamaha's front end is sometimes taxed in the bumps. Saddleless, plastic skis are a class act, though

acquisitions and really jack the Venom's price tag into the black hole of value-vacuum.

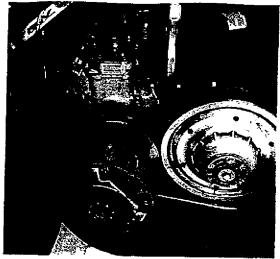
It comes down to this: Although the Venom may not be for everyone, we feel it does offer a lot for those buyers who specifically want a conventionally designed, distance cruising, groomed trail kind of sled. Much of the value boost comes from the high manufacturing quality present here and, from what we've observed over the last fifteen years or so, old Yamahas wear well and keep their resale value at healthy levels. In the big picture, it represents, not the strongest value of the group but nevertheless, credible bang for the buck.



Ski-Doo REV500SS Trail

Clearly, the REV is changing the modern snowmobile. More developments from the other OEMs are soon to follow but you can be assured of this rider

forward ergonomics are the REV's calling card and many buyers are willing to step up and par more to experience the amazing difference they



The 600 hidden in the REV's bodywork is a strong running cylinder reed design with flat-slide carbs and exhaust vaives. Certainly not as potent as the 600HO or SDI mills available but nevertheless, a lot of blast for the bling.

is a little heavy on its sticker, it need not apologize. Why: Because it ain't a 5(8)? The 500SS uses the original Series III Rotax 600cc twin for motivation. This engine utilizes the smaller 440/500 cases to produce a very credible 110 plus HP surge. It first appeared in 1999 in the original ZX MX-Z 600 In its debut year, the 600 Series III was potent but had to take

on the imposing 600 Polaris

Pricewise, the 500SS hits the nail pretty squarely. Here's the twist - even if the 500 SS

competitive

Liberty twin: not a small chore. As the millennium turned over and 600 performance levels became silly, exceeding the 120 HP mark, Ski-Doo remoled the Series III 600 and incorporated the big-block 700/800 cases with new cylinders. This motor could scavenge mure air and fuel through its cylinder reed design. The original 600 went to Rotax heaven for two seasons.

Ski-Doo wisely chose to revive this bulletproof engine for use in the REV 500SS. But again, we can't help but wonder why the masquerade? Why throw a 600 in a sled and call it a 500? The answer lies in two rationales. First, you'll notice Ski-Doodoes not offer a liquid coaled 500 engine in its fineup anymore. Removing this engine size was pare of a cost rationalization program which prvoted on less tooling, lowered cost per unit and ultimately, more profit per unit. Not a bad approach, except for this reality: the 500 class is still a good place to do business!

The other problem Ski-Doo has addressed with this stealth 600 is insurance premiums in some key markets, particularly the bread basket of US sales, the Midwest. These states have fought hard against an insurance edict penalizing over-500cc steds. The 500SS is officially a 500 class sled and slips under the insuro-radar, obtaining coverage for less than a

600cc or bigger sled.

Here's another thing. In "Raiders of the Lost Ark" there's a scene where Harrison Ford faces a giant bad guy, wielding a sword. Indiana Jones simply reaches for his revolver and shoots the big dude. The moral' Arriving at a pea shooter fight carrying a bazooka insures success.

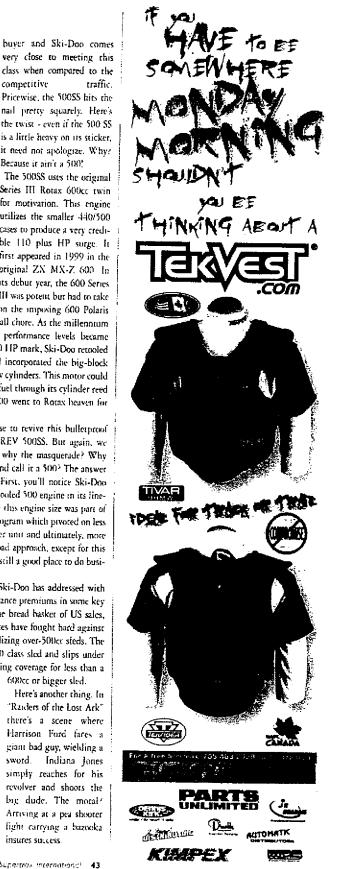


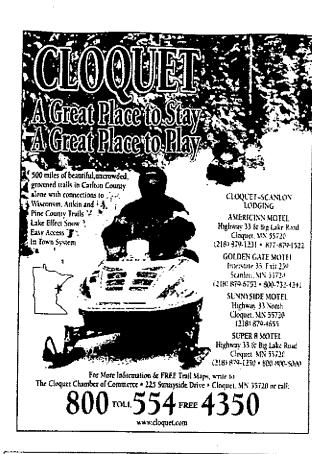
The most obvious cost-down here is the use of more basic gas cell shocks. To be fair, the Trail version REV still rides very well, mostly a result of its rider forward design.

make, Ski-Doo is to be saluted in its attempt to produce a liquid cooled REV at a value price.

The REV 500SS is targeted at the 500 class

	PRICE COS	PRICE COMPARISON IN USID THE			
HOOSE	LASE PRICE	UPGRADE	COMPARABLE		
SABERCAT 500	\$5,799	\$7,599 (Sabercat 600EFI LX)	\$6,899 (Firecat F-5)		
INDY 500	\$5,499	\$7,249 (XC600SP)	\$6,749 (XC500SP)		
REVSOOSS	\$6,399	\$7,599 (600HO Adrenaline)	\$6,899 (500SSAdrenaline)		
VENOM 600	\$6,799	\$7,999 (RS Vector)	\$7,299 (Venom ER)		







RiGHT: The cockpit is nicely equipped and gives no hint of the Trail being a lower priced snowmobile.



There can be little doubt the insertion of this sweet 600 Rotax

into a REV chassis is a home run from both a value and performance standpoint. The 500SS mimies the performance of the potent 600 HO Rorax REV at all trail speeds. There's even reason to believe the 500 SS can produce a day's inn on less fuel than the 600 HO. While we won't argue about fuel economy here, we will say there's precious little a 500cc sled can hand the 500SS on a full pull down Keylar Lake. Remember this: There's no replacement for displacement.

After the engine displacement charade is exposed you're left with the special most innovative chassis. This is a real REV with no cheapo rationalizations. There's a well calibrated and durable SC-3 skid with 2-way coupling and a less active rear arm to accommodate the front weighting REVs demand. Up front, Ski-Doo's lightweight A-frame set-up has a fully active sway bar and recalibrated spring rates delivering plush trail responses. Sure, the Trail's less suphisticates gas cell sho ks are not as zoot as the IFP gassers available on the Adrenaline upgrade but, with the REV's rider forward weight bias and a fully evolved skidframe, the ride is still exceptional.

You can unfidently back the REV 500SS into a decreasing radius turn dragging the brake, leaning inside while squeezing the throttle at the apex. The sled will transition from moderate understeer to rail not oversteer with grace. When it comes to running bumps, there's no possible way to compare a REV to the competition. In essence, that's really what we have it say about the 500SS REV. It's a superb value but, all things considered, it's the most incomparable among the sleds covered here.

If you're six feet and under, you can't help but love the REV and the way it glides down a trail. The 600cc engine masquerade is frosting on a piece of cake that, while it's a hit more costly than some others, offers a seriously up-to-date tech package, zoonly styling and a collection of chassis and equipment features not likely to look dated anytime soon. We just with we could ride a hit warmer on this otherwise hard to criticize 8ki-Doo. - C.J. Rawstad

Slapping a Chery Cavalier sticker over a C-6 Corvette emblem makes about as much sense as this. Although the shocks are less impressive than other REVs, everything the works 110 percent. REV chassis. SC-3 skid. Solid! - A.J. Later.

VALUÉ RATING CHART (Mistropic es el 1 peros					
	ABERCAT 500	INDY 500	REV SOOSS	# VENOLEY!	
PRICE	3	4	2	1	
FEATURES	4	2	3	1.1	
DESIGN	3	2	4	2	
ENGINE	3	3	4	-1.4	
RIDE	4	3	3	2	
HANDLING	i 3	3	4	202	
SIZZLE	4	2	4	3 10	
TOTALS	24	19	24	17:10	
,					